



August 4, 2015

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**BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS FIND PATHWAYS IN FOOD & FARMING WITH
CAMP FARM ON! PITCHING
THEIR CONCEPTS TO A CELEBRITY "SHARK TANK" PANEL AT EMPIRE FARM**

Copake, NY – Changing kids lives by bridging the gap between agriculture and entrepreneurial livelihoods - the FarmOn! Foundation is funding the 4th annual Camp FarmOn! at Empire Farm in Columbia County. Twenty students are enrolled in this summer enrichment based on experiential edible education focused and cooperative learning with an added focus on sustainability in terms of profitability and making a huge impact on their community.

This Friday August 7th from 3-5pm after 4 days of learning the business of food on family farms, 20 youth will pitch their concepts to venture capitalists in a "Shark Tank" simulated event to inspire, educate and maybe even win an investment!

Twenty teens, entering grades 8-11 this fall were accepted to attend Camp FarmOn!, the FarmOn! Foundation funded and hosted event at Empire Farm in Copake, NY. Students will visit 8 local farms and food related businesses in the Hudson Valley August 3-6. Visits each morning allows students to ascertain production and profitability learning about the local food systems from entrepreneurs who make a living through Agri-business ventures focused on farming.

Each afternoon Camp FarmOn! fosters the entrepreneurial spirit of youth in agriculture at Empire Farm through activities that engage and teach critical 21st century business skills developing concepts based on themes such as: taste/flavors through Farming Practices, marketing through Food Systems and Packaging (One youth developed an advertisement: *Herbs with Attitude – Dill with It!*), marketplaces and money through Production Beyond the Field and concept development through Impact, Scaling and Brands.

During the program students try out their business thinking and confidence building skills and collaborating in small teams to develop a value added business model. Camp FarmOn! culminates with a "pitch" to a team of successful entrepreneurial "Sharks" who will pick the team that displays the most viable concept and financial potential to sustain profitability related to food, farming or a business they visited during Camp FarmOn!.

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The “Pitch”

Four teams of teens will not only develop a “value added” business concept to support a local agri-business but also pitch it to a panel of venture capitalists: Investment Banker Michael Rietbrock, MIT Professor Chris Weaver, Rainbow Room Chef Jonathan Wright, R-NBA star Eric Williams, Columbia County Chamber of Commerce Director David Colby and Emmy Awarded Producer Nanci Ross. Guests are welcome to attend and watch the exciting Shark Tank live at 556 Empire Farm Road in Copake, N.Y. Call (518) 329-FARM for more detailed information.

Scholarship Funded

\$10,000.00 in funding for this fully funded unique opportunity came from the generosity of the FarmOn! Foundation and a \$1000.00 grant from Farm Credit East.

About FarmOn! Foundation

FarmOn! Foundation is a non-profit organization of professional farmers, educators, influencers, supporters, nutritionists, students, and community leaders invested in the future of local agriculture and building local economies. FarmOn! Foundation creates and funds youth educational programming and is working to preserve family farming in America with an edible education. Some of FarmOn! Foundation partners include TasteNY, John Varvatos, Bronx Zoo, NYS Department of Ag & Markets, Local Economies Project, Hudson Valley Fresh, Maple Hill Creamery, Yelp, Whole Foods Market, Modern Farmer, Cornell University CALS, NBA, Disney, and SUNY. In the first-ever partnership of its kind, students at SUNY Cobleskill, Morrisville State College and the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will be able to live and work at the Foundation’s working farm– FarmOn! at Empire Farm in Columbia County in New York State gaining real life experiences in the food production field. Learning will range from seed and soil crop planning to growing food, harvesting it, producing, and cooking food in a commercial teaching kitchen and extend all the way to custom growing for New York’ s institutions, caterers, retailers and chefs.

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